

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1456

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
State Government Operations & Accountability

**Title:** An act relating to changing primary dates and associated election procedures.

**Brief Description:** Changing the primary to the first Tuesday in September.

**Sponsors:** Representative Haigh.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government Operations & Accountability: 2/8/05, 3/2/05 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Moves the date of the primary to the first Tuesday in September.
- Changes other elections-related dates to accommodate the new date of the primary.
- Requires that mail ballots are due by 8 p.m. on the day of a primary election.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Hunt, McDermott and Miloscia.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schindler and Sump.

**Staff:** Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

**Background:**

The primary election is held at the earlier of: (1) the third Tuesday in September prior to a general election; or (2) the seventh Tuesday prior to a general election. Declarations of candidacy may be filed no earlier than the fourth Monday in July and no later than the following Friday.

Elected officials are prohibited from soliciting or accepting campaign funds during the period beginning 30 days before a legislative session and ending 30 days after a legislative session has concluded, and during any special session.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The date of the primary is moved to the first Tuesday in September prior to a general election. Declarations of candidacy for elective office are made with the filing officer during a regular five-day filing period beginning on the second Monday in July and ending on the following Friday.

For primary elections only, absentee or mail ballots must be received by the county auditor, either by mail or at a designated place of deposit, by 8 a.m. on the day of the primary in order to be counted.

The period prohibiting a state official or employee or state legislator from soliciting or accepting contributions is changed to begin on December 24 before a regular legislative session convenes and ends on the day of final adjournment.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill changes the dates when state officials, employees, and legislators are prohibited from soliciting or accepting contributions and requires that mail ballots are due by 8 p.m. on the day of the primary election. Provisions regarding changing the dates for nomination conventions are deleted.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect on January 1, 2006.

**Testimony For:** This bill gives more time to elections officials and has a low impact on things like campaign finance and filing. It is a low impact way to change the primary date.

(With concerns) This bill does not give counties enough time to make a difference. At least one month is needed. This bill may cause the primary to fall right after a federal holiday. The time between filing and the primary should be the same as the time between the primary and the general election.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Haigh, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Kim Wyman, Washington State Association of County Auditors; and Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.**